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IMPERIAL NAVAL DEFENCE

—The Record of— The Liberal Party

From the Secretary of State for the Colonies to
His Royal Highness the Governor-General

Downing Street, 25th October, 1912.

Sir:

1. I have the honour to transmit to Your Royal Highness the accompanying copy of a memorandum relating to the requirements of the Naval Defence of the Empire.

2. This document has been prepared by the Admiralty on the instructions of His Majesty's Government in compliance with the request of Mr. Borden with a view to presentation to the Dominion Parliament if, and when, the Dominion Ministers deem it necessary.

I have, etc.

L. HARCOURT.

Section 10 of this document reads as follows:

"10. The Prime Minister of the Dominion having enquired in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective, we have no hesitation in answering after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply."

**"The Free Pathway across the seas is the
first condition of the Empire's existence."**

—Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden

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Published by THE FEDERAL PRESS AGENCY, 47 Slater St.

(Central Publication and Distribution Bureau for the Conservative Party of Canada)

OTTAWA, CANADA

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THE RECORD OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

"A Dubious Record."

In the Navy issue, we propose to discuss here the record of a Canadian party long in power refusing to assist in the naval defence of the Empire, failing to provide a naval defence even of Canada, and finally in opposition, but in control of the Senate, blocking the loyal offer of the recently elected representatives of the people to assist the Navy of the Empire in time of need.

In 1909 the Canadian Parliament passed a resolution in favour of Canadian assistance towards the Naval Defence of the Empire. Let us see how the Liberal leaders gave effect to the resolution and how they have handled this vital question both in and out of office. As early as 1902 Australia undertook an outlay of \$1,250,000 on Imperial defence at sea. New Zealand gave \$200,000, while Natal and other smaller parts of the Empire contributed their quota to the common defence of the British flag the world over. At the Colonial Conference in 1902, Sir Wilfrid Laurier refused to take any action. Five years later, in 1907, he again refused aid, and even went so far as to prevent the adoption by the Imperial Conference of that year of a resolution favouring concerted action by the Oversea Dominions.

Naval Supremacy threatened.

In 1909 the Liberal Government of Great Britain notified the Dominions that the supremacy of the British Navy was threatened and a wave of Imperial feeling swept Canada and all other parts of the Empire. At the Defence Conference in London that year, the British Admiralty declared that Great Britain could take care of the Atlantic if Canada,

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Australia and New Zealand would unite with her in the creation of an Imperial fleet for the Pacific, consisting of four fleet units each led by a battle-cruiser. Canada was asked to furnish one of these units, **but the Liberal Government wrecked the plan** by refusing to build a battle-cruiser, and by proposing instead to create fragmentary forces, one on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific.

Australia in 1909 proceeded with the creation of a Fleet Unit, as suggested by the Admiralty, and New Zealand went ahead with the construction of the Dreadnought which visited Canadian Ports nearly two years ago, and not long since in the North Sea, in connection with a part of the British Fleet which is so magnificently guarding British interests all over the Empire, took part in more than one battle with a section of the German Navy to the great pride and satisfaction of the people of New Zealand.

The Liberal Government delayed and not until February, 1911, did it call for tenders for this weak and fragmentary force. The tenders were opened on May 1st, 1911, but contracts were still unawarded when the Government met defeat at the polls in September, 1911. It retired from office without having done anything of a practical character such as had been accomplished by our Sister Dominions in Naval Defence; and Canada, by the action of the Liberal Government, was still left in the humiliating position of relying entirely on the British Navy for protection, without contributing anything to her own naval defence or that of the Empire. From first to last the Liberal Government blocked and delayed the movement for joint Imperial Defence and contrived that Canada alone of all self-governing British Nations should do nothing for its own defence or the defence of the Empire.

Time for a Change.

Part of Canada has been continually British for more than 150 years, and the remainder for upwards of two centuries. During that period the British Army and Navy, maintained by British taxpayers, have protected this domain and held it for the Canadian people. For some seventy years the people of British America have governed themselves, but they were never asked by the Mother Country to protect themselves from a foreign foe. Without cost to themselves, the use of Britain's Armies and Britain's Navy has been enjoyed by Canadians as fully as by the people of Great Britain. While the colonies were weak and poor this dependence upon British generosity was excusable, but in recent years as the Dominion has grown rich, while the burden of defence has borne more and more severely on their fellow subjects in the British Islands, self-respecting Canadians, Australians and citizens of other Dominions over the seas have felt that the time had come for a change. These matters have been considered in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; and all long ago decided to pay some part of the price.

Canada in the Rear.

A glance at the record will show that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been most unsympathetic in respect to Imperial Defence. Six years after he attained power, he attended the Imperial (then termed Colonial) Conference in London in 1902. Before leaving for Great Britain he made the statement in Parliament on May 12th, 1902 (Hansard, Vol. 11, p. 4726):—

"That is to say, while we are prepared to discuss this question of Imperial Defence, neither my colleagues nor myself believe that any useful purpose can be served by such discussion. It is no use whatever, at this stage of the proceeding, on the

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floor of this Canadian Parliament, to try to deceive ourselves as to what is intended by this subject of Imperial Defence. If it be intended simply to discuss what part Canada is prepared to take in her own defence, what share of the burden must fall upon us as being responsible for the safety of the land in which we were born and to which we owe our allegiance, in which all our hopes and affections are centred, certainly we are always prepared to discuss that subject. But there is a school abroad, there is a school in England and in Canada, a school which is perhaps represented on the floor of this parliament, which wants to bring Canada into the vortex of militarism which is now the curse and the blight of Europe."

On March 29th, 1909, he declared in the House of Commons (Hansard Report, page 3508), as follows:—

"We see no reason in anything that has taken place recently to depart from the policy laid down in 1902."

Therefore, at this Imperial Conference held in London and composed of representatives of the United Kingdom and of all self-governing Dominions, **Sir Wilfrid Laurier would not permit Canada to be connected with any scheme of Naval Defence.**

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had been in office six years when the Imperial Conference of 1902 was held. At that time other Dominions and Colonies had been for years making some acknowledgment to the Empire for naval defence.

Australia was paying \$530,000 a year, and had a small fleet of gun boats and torpedo boats.

New Zealand was paying \$100,000 a year.

Cape Colony was paying \$150,000 a year.

Natal was paying \$60,000 a year.

Laurier represented Canada at this Imperial Conference. Other Dominions were anxious that something more should be done. Australia raised her contribution from \$530,000 to \$1,000,000 a year. New Zealand doubled her contribution. Cape Colony raised hers from \$150,000 to \$250,000; Natal from \$60,000 to \$175,000. Even Newfoundland, which had been paying a little, promised a larger annual contribution.

Canada had done nothing and would promise nothing, but her representatives suggested that she might establish a Naval Reserve. If this could be construed as a promise it was never fulfilled by Laurier.

Laurier's first great Refusal.

Nothing had been done by Canada for Imperial Defence when the Imperial Conference of 1907 met. Then the question, after five years' postponement, came up for practical discussion. All the Dominions and Colonies which then contributed were prepared to go on as before, except that New Zealand again raised her allowance—this time from \$200,000 to \$500,000. Mr. Brodeur, then Minister of Marine in the Laurier Administration, offered nothing but reasons **why Canada could not share the burden of Empire.** The delegate from Cape Colony, Dr. Smartt, desired to obtain a unanimous declaration of the whole conference approving of the principle of general co-operation in Imperial Defence. He moved the following resolution on the 9th day of May, 1907:

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"That this Conference, recognizing the vast importance of the services rendered by the Navy to the defence of the Empire and the protection of its trade, and the paramount importance of continuing to maintain the Navy in the highest possible state of efficiency, considers it to be the duty of the Dominions beyond the seas to make such contribution toward the upkeep of the Navy as may be determined by their local legislatures—the contribution to take the form of a grant of money, the establishment of local defence, or such other services, in such manner as may be decided upon after consultation with the Admiralty, and as would best accord with their varying circumstances." (Colonial Conference, 1907, p. 541 of the British Blue Book.)

This resolution was not passed, unanimously or otherwise. It was opposed on behalf of Canada by Sir Wilfrid Laurier who declared that if it were not withdrawn **he would vote against it**. His short speech deserves to be a part of the record. As reported in the British Blue Book (page 542) the then Premier of Canada said:

"I am sorry to say, so far as Canada is concerned, we cannot agree to the resolution. We took the ground many years ago that we had enough to do in our respect in our country before committing ourselves to a general claim. The Government of Canada has done a great deal in that respect. Our action was not understood, but I was glad to see that the First Lord of the Admiralty admitted we had done much more than he was aware of. It is impossible, in my humble opinion, to have a uniform policy in this matter; the disproportion is too great between the Mother Country and the Colonies, we have too much to do otherwise. In the Mother Country, you must remember, they have no expenses to incur with regard to public works; whereas, in most of the Colonies, certainly in Canada, we have to tax ourselves to the utmost of our resources in the development of our country, and we could not contribute or undertake to do more than we are doing in that way. For my part, if the motion were pressed to a conclusion, I should have to vote against it."

Representatives of the other Dominions urged Sir Wilfrid to propose or accept some modification from the motion approving of the principle of co-operation. Sir Joseph Ward, of New Zealand, especially urged that an unanimous declaration of willingness to take part should be made, but the Canadian Premier still refused. To Dr. Smartt, he replied: "I have said all I have to say on the subject," and to Sir Joseph Ward's insistence he would only reply: "I am sorry to say that this is a question upon which we could not be unanimous." "Dr. Smartt can move it if he chooses, or withdraw it, but if he presses it I should have to vote against it." This killed the proposition and Dr. Smartt withdrew his motion, reluctantly admitting that **Canada had blocked the way**.

The Resolution of 1909.

In the Parliamentary Session of 1909 Sir George Foster brought up the question of Naval Defence in the following resolution:—

"That in the opinion of this house, in view of her great and varied resources, of her geographical position and national environments, and of that spirit of self-help and self-respect which alone befits a strong and growing people, Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibility and financial burden incident to the suitable protection of her exposed coast line and great seaports." (Hansard, page 3434.)

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as Premier, with a strong majority behind him, would not allow this motion to pass. It was too much like the resolution of Dr. Smartt, which he had killed two summers before in the Imperial Conference. He moved a long amendment, or substitute motion. It opposed "the payment of any stated contribution to the Imperial Treasury for Naval or Military purposes " and thus condemned the course of the other Dominions. It declared that Canada had assumed " considerable military expenditure formerly charged upon the Imperial Treasury " and closed with the declaration:

" The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial Navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Great Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire and the peace of the world.

" The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and the honour of the Empire." (Hansard, 1909, page 3572.)

Sir Robert Borden and the Conservative Opposition were anxious to get some sort of positive and definite declaration through the House; and they agreed to this amendment after Sir Robert had induced Sir Wilfrid to strike out the absurd reference to military obligation already assumed by Canada. Sir Robert also persuaded the Premier to change the words " any stated contribution " into " regular and periodical contribution " and to add the word " speedy " before " organization " in the first clause quoted. This permitted special and emergency contributions, such as that of the three Dreadnoughts. The resolution as adopted did not satisfy the Conservative leaders; but they were in a minority and took what they could get.

The Mandate and the Defence Conference.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had always claimed that this was a mandate of Parliament for the establishment of a Canadian Navy. Let us see how he obeyed it. In the same year came the Imperial Defence Conference in London. Mr. Brodeur, still Minister of Marine, was one of the Canadian representatives. The British Ministers made perfectly clear what the Admiralty and the Imperial Government considered best. They said that **one Navy was best**, that the most effective defence by sea would be accomplished by the direct assistance of the Dominions to a single Empire Navy, any part of which could be used at any time to defend any part of the Empire. Here is their own statement:

" The greatest output of strength for a given expenditure is obtained by the maintenance of a single Navy with the concomitant unity of training and unity of command. In furtherance, then, of the simple strategical ideal the maximum of power would be gained if all parts of the Empire contributed, according to their needs and resources, to the maintenance of the British Navy." (British Blue Book, page 21.)

But if Canada or Australia preferred to undertake local defence, the Admiralty proposed that a partnership Navy for the Pacific could be created by the establishment of

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four fleet units—Canada providing one for her coast, Australia one for hers, New Zealand providing half her unit, Britain paying for the other half, and Britain alone supplying a fleet unit for the China Sea. A fleet unit, as then defined by the Admiralty, was:

1 Battle Cruiser like the Australia or New Zealand.

3 Cruisers of the Bristol class (say 5,600 tons), unarmoured.

6 Destroyers.

3 Submarines.

In all 13 vessels, with crews of 2,425 men, the whole equipment costing \$18,000,000.

Australia accepted this plan and has gone on with it.

New Zealand ordered her Dreadnought, which has become part of the British Navy, and three destroyers.

Meanwhile Australia, New Zealand and the other Dominions—all but Canada—continued their yearly payment. New Zealand promised to maintain her Dreadnought when completed. New Zealand has less than one-seventh the population of Canada.

Laurier's second Refusal.

Again Canada failed to rise to the occasion. Canada would not join the other Dominions in providing a Pacific Navy and would not provide a complete fleet unit. The Canadian Government invited the Admiralty to explain how much could be done for \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 a year in the way of supplying two squadrons, one for the Atlantic and one for the Pacific. Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not accept the condition that the Navy which he proposed to create would go under the control of the Admiralty as part of the Empire Navy in war time.

The Conference ended August 19th, 1909. Australian and New Zealand representatives went home and the construction of their ships began at once. By June of the next year, the Dreadnought Cruisers New Zealand and Australia were under construction in Great Britain for their respective Dominions. On January 18, 1910, Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced his alleged Navy Bill. The Empire was interested to see what the leading Dominion would do. It found that the Canadian Measure did not provide for a fleet unit. It did not provide for a Dreadnought. It did not provide that the proposed squadrons should, in case of war, become part of the Empire Navy. **It did not even declare that the navy should go to the defence of the Empire in any war.**

The largest ship of this fleet was a light unarmoured cruiser of the Bristol class. Four such cruisers, with a smaller one and six destroyers, were to compose the Canadian Navy, and this was to be divided into two squadrons, one for each ocean.

Navy Issue in Parliament.

Then arose for the first time a distinct naval issue in the Canadian Parliament. The Conservative party refused to accept this proposal as a fulfilment of Canadian obligations and a performance of Canadian duty. Sir Robert Borden pronounced the programme weak and ineffective. It did not follow the recommendations of the Admiralty. It did not carry out the Imperial Defence Conference programme. It was far behind the undertaking of the Australian Commonwealth. It did not even exceed the proposal of New Zealand, a Dominion with less than half the population of Quebec. It did not give effect

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to the resolution of the Canadian Commons, unanimously adopted the year before. Sir Wilfrid had modified and weakened this resolution before he allowed it to pass, but even then it called for the "speedy" organization of a naval service. His policy of 1910, though it proposed a preposterously feeble local navy, required six years for completion.

It has been shown that the Admiralty at the Defence Conference, a few months before, had strongly urged that the fleets to be organized by the Dominions should be controlled by the Admiralty for strategical purposes. But Sir Wilfrid's Navy was to be altogether and at all times under the control of the Canadian Ministry, subject to the provision that the Government in time of emergency might place the Navy at the disposal of the King if it thought proper. The meaning of the provision is not quite clear, but the following extract from the debate shows how Sir Wilfrid Laurier explained it in reply to Sir Robert Borden.

A Neutral Navy.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—Would the Right Hon. gentleman permit me to ask him a question? Suppose the Canadian ship meets a ship of similar armament and power belonging to an enemy, meets her on the high seas, what is she to do? I do not ask now what she will do if attacked, but will she attack, will she fight?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier.—I do not know that she would fight. I do not know that she should fight either. She should not fight until the Government by which she is commissioned have determined whether she should go into the war. That is the position we take. My hon. friend takes a different position. He says that without any question, under all circumstances, we are bound to send our ships into the war. We take a different position and we say: let the country judge between us.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—Would our ports and harbours be neutral like our fleet until an Order-in-Council had been passed?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier.—I do not understand what my hon. friend means by asking if they should be neutral.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—I understand the Prime Minister to say that our ships would not fight until they were ordered to do so, and therefore they would in effect be neutral until the Governor-in-Council had made an order that they should participate in the war. Have I misstated my hon. friend's position?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier.—No.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—Then, inasmuch as our ships, under the conditions mentioned, will be practically neutral, I would like to know whether our ports and harbours will also be neutral in the same way.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier.—I do not understand what my hon. friend means by asking if they were to be neutral. If he means after an enemy has come into our harbour then it would be time to resist them with our fleet.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—But if our ships do not attack the enemy when they meet the enemy on the high seas, on the same principle, may not the enemy's fleet come into our harbour without resistance or attack, without any fear of aggression. Surely that can be done if it is feasible for the country owning these harbours to maintain neutrality on the high seas?

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier.—That would be a question to determine any time a warship entered a Canadian port.

Mr. R. L. Borden.—The position of the Prime Minister is that ships flying the British flag should meet an enemy on the high seas and not attack them.

A Grave Situation.

Meanwhile the British situation had become more serious. Germany, with the strongest army in the world, had set out also to rival Britain as a naval power. Satisfied that on land she and the allies under her control could dominate Europe, she proposed to extend that dominance to the sea. The preamble to her naval law declared that **“Germany must possess a battle fleet of such strength that even for the most powerful naval adversary a war would involve such risks as to make that power’s own supremacy doubtful.”**

Germany adopted a programme of naval construction in accordance with this declaration. Between 1900 and 1912 she adopted measures to increase her battleships from 12 to 61, her crews from 25,000 to 101,500, and her naval expenditure from \$30,000,000 to \$115,000,000. A critical naval situation had thus been created, destroying all previous British theories based on a two power standard. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had heard all about this at the Conference. He was asked to consider it in his naval programme. He was shown that as matters were developing his measure would be ineffective to help the Empire in the approaching crisis. It would be too weak, too late and too isolated.

But the Liberal Government could not be induced to take more prompt or more effective action or to make such action as it did take a part of the general scheme of common defence. The Laurier Ministry continued its opposition to the principle of a single united navy, for the defence of the whole Empire. Had the Government at that time brought down a naval measure even partly satisfying the aspirations of a self-respecting people, and offering substantial help to the Empire in a crisis, the Conservatives would have given it their cheerful support in the hope that it might be further developed.

Conservatives Propose Immediate Aid.

Sir Robert Borden and his party were naturally not prepared without consultation with the Imperial authorities to set forth a complete and permanent naval policy. That required to be taken up anew, and worked out in detail. But there was the obvious opportunity of strengthening the Navy of the Empire in the way that the rulers of the Empire and the naval authorities desired to strengthen it. The Admiralty was meeting German Dreadnoughts by British Dreadnoughts. Canada could make no mistake by assisting in this undertaking and adding to the British margin of safety. It was therefore proposed by the Conservative party that Canada should offer immediate aid to the Empire by paying for two Dreadnoughts. That would be the greatest service possible at the moment. Afterward a permanent naval policy worthy of the country should be proposed and submitted to the people, and, on their approval, should become the declared and established policy of the Dominion.

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Two Dreadnoughts.

Sir Robert Borden set forth the view of his party in the following amendment:

"That no permanent policy should be entered upon involving large future expenditures of this character until it had been submitted to the people and has received their approval.

That in the meantime, the immediate duty of Canada and the impending necessities of the Empire can best be discharged and met by placing without delay at the disposal of the Imperial authorities, as a free and loyal contribution from the people of Canada, such an amount as may be sufficient to purchase or construct two battleships or armoured cruisers of the latest Dreadnought type, giving to the Admiralty full discretion to expend the said sum at such time and for such purposes of naval defence as in their judgment may best serve to increase the united strength of the Empire and thus assure its peace and security." (Hansard 1910, page 2991.)

After a long debate this amendment was rejected by a party vote of 119 to 78. The Government Naval Bill became law May 4th, 1910, about the time that the construction of the Dreadnought cruisers "Australia" and "New Zealand" was begun.

And then nothing of importance was done. The programme called for the construction of the ships in Canada. After waiting three months the Navy Department asked for the names of firms willing to tender; and eight months afterwards tenders were invited for the construction of four cruisers and six destroyers. These offers were received May 1st, 1911, a year after the Act was passed.

Tenders wait; they go to Washington.

At this stage the Ministers forgot all about Imperial or local defence and became interested in reciprocity negotiations. The reciprocity programme was as hostile to the closer commercial organization of the Empire as the naval programme was to its defensive organization. It absorbed the attention of the Ministers all that autumn and the winter of 1911. Evidently there was no desire for prompt tenders for the ships. When the tenders came in on the first day of May, 1911, no action was taken on them. They were left all through May, June, July, August and September. When the Government resigned in October they had not been touched. This is the way the Laurier administration went about the speedy construction of a Canadian Navy. The reciprocity campaign was on, and those who were supporting the programme to make Canada a commercial and industrial adjunct of the United States were no longer interested in their own navy bill.

Laurier vs. Pugsley.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier and one of his colleagues have given contradictory explanations of the delay. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's explanation given in December, 1912, was this:

"We did not choose to award the contracts, in view of the impending change of Government. We thought that as the general elections were coming, that it would not be fair, in a matter of this kind which was at issue between the two parties, to award the contracts, in case there might be, as there was, a change of Government."

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As a matter of fact it was not until long after the tenders were received that the elections were proposed. Sir Wilfrid adjourned the House for two months and went to England for the Coronation after receiving the tenders. Then he returned and resumed the discussion of reciprocity in Parliament. Dissolution was not until near the end of July, leaving three months before that time and two months afterwards for the Government to deal with the tenders.

Sir Wilfrid's colleague, Hon. Wm. Pugsley, gave an entirely different reason for the delay. When he was asked why no action was taken he informed the House of Commons that:

"The reason was that in the Province of Quebec the question of a Canadian Navy was being made an issue. It was not being made an issue in any other part of Canada, it is true, but in the Province of Quebec it is being made an issue. In that Province there were certain public men going from platform to platform seeking to create a prejudice against the Government, seeking to make people believe that in some way the creation of a Canadian Navy would work disastrously to the people of Quebec, that it would mean conscription, and that it would mean that the young men of Quebec would be drawn off into foreign wars."

This is a more interesting and more candid explanation. Mr. Pugsley, who sat in Council with the Premier on the question, reports that the contracts were not made because the Quebec people were led to believe that the Navy would mean conscription. Even a neutral Navy was too Imperial for some of the then Premier's friends. Therefore they were to suppose, at least till after the election, that **there would be no Canadian Navy**. This shows how the Laurier Government played with the whole question. It may be added, as a sample of the Liberal method of treatment, that Mr. Pugsley declared in the House that if the Liberal Government had built the ships they all would have been built in St. John by the Cammell Laird Company, while Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking in the same session, asserted that if the contract had been awarded the four cruisers and six destroyers would then have been under construction at Montreal.

Both the Premier and Mr. Pugsley declared in the House that the Naval Question had been an issue in the Election; consequently the policy announced by the winning party should have been adopted by Parliament. Mr. Borden had proclaimed the Conservative policy in Parliament. It had been an issue there; it was included in the party platform in the elections. But when the Conservatives went back from the country with a majority, and being true in office to the policy which they proclaimed in opposition, brought in a measure in exact accord with their platform, **the defeated Ministers caused the measure to be killed by the irresponsible Senate**. And they still called themselves Liberals.

Official Revelations.

This record of the Laurier administration in the matter of the defence of the Empire may be closed with some reference to the reports of their chief officers, Admiral Kingsmill, Director of Naval Service, and Commander Roper, Chief of Staff. On the 9th of October, 1911, the day before the Borden Administration took office, Admiral Kingsmill submitted a memorandum setting forth that:

"Owing to the rapidity with which designs change it is anticipated that, if it takes six years to complete the programme, the ships will be out of date before they are completed."

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Commander Roper reported:

"A programme having been drawn up, it was adopted by the Canadian Government and embarked upon in the early part of 1910. From that time up to the present it has only been proceeded with piece-meal and items have, from one cause and another, been postponed and again postponed until at last a point approaching stagnation is being reached, and all the most undesirable features, such as uncertainty, delay and unnecessary expense are being produced. . . . Four cruisers and six destroyers have been authorized by Parliament. So far back as August, 1910, it was announced that these vessels would be built by contract and that tenders would shortly be called for. It is now the last half of 1911 and the contract has not yet been awarded.

The earliest that the first cruiser for Canada can be expected, supposing the contract to be awarded without further delay, is the latter part of 1914. In other words, this type of vessel will be four years old before it is completed, while the last will be seven years old, and rapidly approaching the stage of obsolescence."

This memorandum was dated September 20th, 1911, the day before the elections were held, and was handed to Admiral Kingsmill for transmission to the late Minister.

This appropriately closes the record of the Laurier administration in the matter of the Naval Defence of the Empire. It may thus be summed up:—

The Story in brief.

From 1896 to 1902 nothing was done or promised, though other Overseas Dominions and Colonies were contributing.

At the Conference of 1902 Canada was the only Dominion which had promised nothing while the others increased their aid.

In 1907, while others further increased their help, Canada still offered nothing. While others promoted a declaration in favour of some general action by all the Dominions, Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared that he would vote against it and so had the proposition withdrawn.

In 1909 Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his majority carried through Parliament a modified and weakened form of Sir George Foster's motion in favour of Canadian participation in the Naval Defence of the Empire.

The same year the Laurier Government refused to become responsible for a fleet unit such as Australia agreed to provide, and also refused to furnish a Dreadnought such as Australia and New Zealand had each provided.

In 1910 the Government brought down a programme for a "neutral" navy of two squadrons, headed by unarmoured light cruisers, to be completed in six years, which might or might not support the Empire in war.

During nearly two years more the Government remained in office, and not a ship of this programme was built or begun or contracted for.

A Leader who keeps his Pledges.

We have seen Sir Robert Borden and his party in opposition propose, instead of the ineffective and slow action of the Government, a practical programme. They believed that trouble was coming in Europe. They knew that Britain was straining every nerve

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to maintain the naval supremacy demanded by her vast Empire, her merchant fleet, and by the insignificance of her land forces compared with European States. Therefore they had proposed an immediate contribution by Canada of two Dreadnoughts. This was the first part of the programme ; while the second was the development of a permanent and comprehensive Canadian Naval policy, **to be worked out in consultation with the Admiralty and the other Dominions, and to be ratified by the Canadian people.**

This policy was set forth in the Borden amendment to the Naval resolution of 1910. It was the policy announced by the Conservative leader in the election campaign. It was the policy which he came into power pledged to carry out, the policy which the Conservative party at once took up when it obtained office. The first half was embodied in the Naval Aid Bill of 1912, which the Commons, obedient to the mandate of the people, adopted, and which the Senate, obedient to the mandate of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, by whom the majority were appointed, has destroyed.

Sir Robert consults the Admiralty.

The Borden Government took office in October, 1911. The session of Parliament began next month. At its close the Premier went to England, conferred with Imperial Ministers and Admiralty authorities, obtaining public and confidential information as to the most pressing requirements of Naval Defence. Later in the year he sought from the Admiralty a statement of the naval situation, so far as it affected the question of Canadian assistance. Especially the First Lord of the Admiralty was asked in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective. The reply was the comprehensive and instructive memorandum which Sir Robert Borden read to the House on introducing his Naval Aid Bill. This remarkable paper, with which the public is now quite familiar, gives a striking account of the rapid growth of the German Navy, and of the difficulty thus imposed upon Britain. It closed with this definite and distinct recommendation.

"The Prime Minister of the Dominion having inquired in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective, we have no hesitation in answering, after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances, that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply."

This document was received early in November, 1912. Parliament met November 21. The debate on the address closed December 3, and two days later Sir Robert Borden introduced this Bill, which may be compared with the Admiralty recommendation quoted above.

The Dreadnought Bill.

"From and out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada there may be paid and applied a sum not exceeding thirty-five million dollars for the purpose of immediately increasing the effective naval forces of the Empire."

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The said sum shall be used and applied under the direction of the Governor-in-Council in the construction and equipment of battleships or armoured cruisers of the most modern and powerful type.

The said ships when constructed and equipped shall be placed by the Governor-in-Council at the disposal of His Majesty for the common defence of the Empire.

The said sum shall be paid, used and applied and the said ships shall be constructed and placed at the disposal of His Majesty subject to such terms, conditions and arrangements as may be agreed upon between the Governor-in-Council and His Majesty's Government."

The conditions and arrangements agreed upon between the Imperial and Federal Governments are not all set forth in this Bill. It was stated by Sir Robert Borden, as one of the conditions, that in the event of Canada establishing a navy of her own, these ships would be transferred to the Dominion after reasonable notice. It was also agreed or understood that in the development of the Imperial shipbuilding programme, a number of the unarmoured British vessels would be constructed in Canadian dockyards.

Obstructed in House; Killed in Senate.

This Naval Aid Bill was strenuously opposed by all possible methods, fair and unfair, which the Liberal Party could devise. It was attacked as a sacrifice of Canadian self-government and as an unnecessary contribution.

No measure in a Canadian Parliament ever received such opposition; for months the Liberal Party endeavoured to defeat the proposals of the Government to aid in the Naval Defence of the Empire. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his followers tried by the most violent tactics, unparliamentary and otherwise, to prevent its passage; and, after his failure in the House of Commons, he directed his followers in the Senate to kill it, which, much to his gratification, they did.

Sir Wilfrid and his friends declared that the Empire was in no danger, that there was no emergency, and no need of aid to the British Navy. They proposed no fewer than nineteen amendments. From the 5th of December till the 15th of May they opposed and obstructed the measure which nevertheless passed the Commons on the latter date under rules of the House amended to overcome obstruction. The Bill was supported at every division by a substantial majority. Sir Wilfrid's main amendment was defeated by a majority of 47, the second reading was carried by a majority of 32 and the third reading by 33.

The measure was killed in the Senate after a short debate on May 29th by a Liberal majority of 24.

Sir Wilfrid now wants two Fleet Units.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who in power had refused to provide even one fleet unit, with a Dreadnought at the head of it, and who for two years failed to carry out or even to begin his small programme, now proposed, by way of amendment, the speedy creation of two fleet units. That is to say, he recommended:—

2 Dreadnoughts.

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- 6 Cruisers.
- 12 Torpedo Boat Destroyers.
- 6 Submarines.

The substantive part of his principle amendment reads as follows:

"This House is further of the opinion that to increase the power and mobility of the Imperial Navy by the addition by Canada under the above act (meaning the Naval Service Act of 1910) of two fleet units to be stationed on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of Canada, respectively, rather than by a contribution of money or ships, is the policy best calculated to afford relief to the United Kingdom in respect to the burden of Imperial Naval Defence, and, in the words of the Admiralty Memorandum, to restore greater freedom to the movements of the British squadrons in every sea and directly promote the security of the Dominions; and that the Government of Canada should take such steps as shall lead to the accomplishment of this purpose as speedily as possible." (Hansard, 1912-13, page 1039.)

A \$140,000,000 Policy.

Sir Wilfrid's new programme, which was devised overnight, to replace the one which he had developed in fifteen years of office, would cost fifty million dollars if the ships were built in Britain. According to the calculation which he made in 1910 they would cost one third more, or about sixty-seven million dollars, if built in Canada, as he proposed. But to build Dreadnoughts in Canada would require a complete naval shipbuilding equipment of the very highest class. Hon. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, when consulted, said that the cost of such a plant would be seventy-five million dollars, and it would take five or six years to get it ready. The first ship of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speedily constructed fleet would not be completed for at least eight years. When he got his two fleet units built he would have to keep on building two or three battleships a year or else his seventy-five million dollar plant and all the men employed would become idle. The great war then impending would be over long before the first ship was built, or even begun. If, as a result of this conflict, the world gains a respite from the creation of navies, these naval shipbuilding establishments would be worth their weight in scrap metal.

Sir Wilfrid's two-fleet-units amendment was **pure humbug**. He had for years consistently opposed the idea of Canada doing anything to aid in Naval Defence, and in power, while pretending to start the nucleus of a Canadian Navy, had for two and one half years trifled with the question and eventually was thrust from power without having done anything of a practical character. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his followers in supporting this amendment voted (13th February, 1913) that Parliament should at once proceed to build these two fleet units without consulting the people. Within an hour they all voted for another amendment declaring that Parliament should consult the people before doing anything at all. **The nineteen amendments contradicted each other in all kinds of ways and were all purely obstructive.**

The sixty-seven million dollar shipbuilding scheme, and the seventy-five million dollar plant amendment, showed that Sir Wilfrid had found the Canadian people determined that something should be done. Yes, his fight in the Commons and the blow struck in the Senate at his command, proved that if the Laurier Party could have its way **Empire defence would get nothing from Canada.** So far the Liberal leaders have been able to stop it and

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the British Navy, now struggling for the life of the Empire in the North Sea, has not a Canadian ship in it.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier when in power, had he so desired, could have done something of a substantial character to aid in the Naval Defence of the Empire—he failed to accomplish anything.

After he was thrust from office, when he no longer had any power to initiate legislation such as would lead to the creation of something substantial in the way of naval aid, he proposed impracticable and inconsistent schemes. It would have been more creditable to himself and the Liberal Party had he refrained from his last and most fatal blow to himself and his followers and allowed the Government to order the three Dreadnoughts to be built. Before the critical time arrived they would have been approaching completion.

Borden's Measure Welcome to Britain.

The Borden Naval Policy brought out a remarkable outburst of joy, gratitude and hope from the centre of the British Empire and made the enemies and rivals of Britain conscious that they had to reckon with all the British Dominions and not with the British Islands alone. When the Senate made its great refusal, the news was a message of gloom and disappointment to the Mother Country while Germany was filled with exultation.

When the Bill was brought down, and while there was no thought that the Senate would destroy it, the London Times said:—

"The gift of three Dreadnoughts, striking and significant as it would be at any time, will carry a yet greater significance in this moment of grave international strain. The world has not yet understood what the British Empire means, but it is beginning to understand to-day that as a weight in the scales for peace its power and influence are unparalleled."

Another great English paper, the London Standard, said:—

"If the Canadian Parliament accepts, as no doubt it will, Mr. Borden's propositions, we shall enter upon a new era of hope and security and can face the perils of the future with the confidence born of the knowledge that it is not the island kingdom, but the world Empire with which the adversaries or assailants of Britain will have to reckon."

Other acknowledgments of the British and Empire Press include these:—

London Advertiser:—

"It is a great example to set to the rest of the Empire."

London Graphic:—

"A thrill of pride will run through the veins of every Englishman as he reads this morning Mr. Borden's speech announcing the determination of his Government to ask Canada to give three fully equipped Super-Dreadnoughts to the Mother Country."

London Express:—

"Thus strengthened we are invincible."

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London Daily News:—

"Three Dreadnoughts voluntarily provided by a Dominion are worth more to the Empire and the fleet than the same ships provided by the British taxpayer. They prove in the most practical way that the base on which our naval strength is founded is not merely insular but Imperial."

Pall Mall Gazette:—

"We acknowledge with full heart the splendor of the token of love and loyalty contained in Mr. Borden's proposals."

London News:—

"In all the history of the Empire there is no brighter page than that which is written in the story of Canada's loyalty and devotion Mr. Borden's scheme is the best that could have been devised for the meeting of the perils that confront us."

London Standard:—

"The foreign powers now know what they are in for."

Premier Asquith:—

"Of course, there should be formal and authoritative expression of the universal feeling of warm appreciation and heartfelt gratitude which has been aroused in the Mother Country by the splendid patriotism and liberality displayed by our fellow-subjects."

London Outlook:—

"Three Super-Dreadnoughts in themselves affect the international balance of power on the waters. But they are still more important as an expression of the determination of the younger members of the Empire that, let the cost be what it may, the supremacy of Great Britain as a sea power shall be maintained against any odds."

Glasgow Herald:—

"Canada's splendid and unconditional offer of three Dreadnoughts to the British Navy has made a profound impression throughout the Empire, we might say throughout the world."

London World:—

"The effective power of the Empire has received an addition not only of seven million pounds but of seven million people."

Norwich Press:—

"It is an announcement to the world that whenever Great Britain shall be hardly pressed we may look with safety and confidence to its offspring."

Hundreds of these quotations might be given not only from the press of Great Britain but of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

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Defeat caused great Disappointment,

The destruction of the Naval Aid Bill by the Senate came as a surprise and a shock to the British Government and people. In the British House of Commons, July 17th, the Hon. Winston Churchill said:—

"The rejection of the Canadian Naval Aid Bill by the Senate of Canada has for the time at least deprived us of the aid on which we had counted, and unless that gap is filled by a further sacrifice of the British taxpayer, the general defence of the Empire, apart altogether from the defence of the United Kingdom, would be short of Admiralty requirements from the end of 1915 * * *. We have therefore accelerated three ships in this year's programme which would not otherwise have been taken till the end of the year."

But Joy in Germany.

Germany's note of joy was after the fashion of the following, from the "Nachrichten," on June 3, 1913, a leading journal of Hamburg:—

"Whatever may be decided upon later, **the actual decision of the Canadian Senate means at any rate a heavy moral and material loss for the defence of the Empire**, for Mr. Borden's promise had been foolishly enough counted on. His offer made an enormous impression on the whole world. Mr. Churchill pointed out this fact especially in the well-known Memorandum of the Admiralty. This impression will not only be destroyed, but people will everywhere obtain the conviction that **England cannot depend upon such help from her colonies**. 'By rivals and enemies,' says the Morning Post to-day, 'the decision will be eagerly welcomed. By friends it will be regarded as ominous.' **The impression must inevitably be created that the solidarity of the Empire is a myth and that those powers which would like to see the overthrow of British naval supremacy need not be discouraged in their efforts by the thought that their challenge would be met by the united resources of the Mother Country and of every one of the daughter states.**"

What the Liberals knew.

During the long debate, and for a year after, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, his former Cabinet Colleagues and supporters were never tired of declaring that there was no emergency. They had before them a published Memorandum of the Admiralty declaring:—

"That the superiority of the British Empire at sea was necessary to its security."

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From this and from other sources they knew also:—

That recent German naval laws had quadrupled the Navy of that Empire.

That Britain had failed in every attempt to induce Germany to agree to a mutual abatement of battleship construction.

That Germany had recently begun to keep nearly all her ships in full permanent commission.

That Germany had declared in her naval law that she must have a navy capable of disputing the supremacy of Great Britain.

That most of Germany's ships were new, while many of Britain's were old.

That while Germany could hold her navy on her own short coast line, within a few hours striking distance of Britain, Great Britain had possessions on all oceans and seas and a home coast ten times greater than Germany.

That in consequence Britain had been obliged to withdraw her ships from overseas and concentrate at home near the ships of her possible enemy.

That within ten years Britain had been obliged to reduce her overseas fleet from 160 ships to 76.

This information from the Admiralty which led up to the official statement that the best help Canada could give would be the contribution of three Dreadnoughts was all in the hands of all the Liberal members during the debate.

That the German authorized programme would make her navy stronger in 1920 than Britain was then.

That the increase in German Navy was not due to the British entente with France, but was wholly planned and well under way before these agreements were made.

That Germany was maintaining in full commission ready for active service a proportion of her navy larger than any other power has so maintained in modern times.

That the great German Navy was not dispersed over the world to protect commerce and colonies and that German ships were not of a class suitable for such a purpose. The German Navy was concentrated and kept concentrated in close proximity to the German and British Coasts, and was designed at every stage and in every particular with a view to a fleet action on a large scale in the North Sea or North Atlantic against a navy of some other great power.

That while the Germany Navy was not calculated for service in distant seas, it was not required for the defence of Germany whose coast is protected by fortified islands and guarded by natural and artificial forts.

That the whole character of the German Navy in the structure of ships, armour, armament, torpedo boats and submarines, etc., shows its design for aggressive and offensive fleet action, on a vast scale in the North Sea or neighbouring waters, while their system of naval tactics follows the same design.

They had also good opportunity of knowing that an extensive and systematic establishment of German espionage had been maintained for years in England and Wales, chiefly on the Sea Coast.

And they could not fail to realize that in the opinion of the Admiralty the aid which Canada could give at that time was not to be measured only in ships or money, but that it would have a moral value out of all proportion to the material assistance afforded. The failure of Canada at that moment, after all that had been said, to take any effective steps must produce, as in truth it did produce, the worse impression abroad.

How do they read now?

In the face of this and other information in their hands, and of all the serious declarations of the British Statesmen, to say nothing of German leaders, Sir Wilfrid and his friends ridiculed the idea and claimed that there was not an emergency or need of help. They had no end of fun over any suggestion of a crisis. In view of the sudden and early development of an emergency, which they are now compelled to recognize, this ridicule is now sinister reading. Here are some examples:—

In presenting his amendment for two fleet units (Hansard 1025, 1912-13) Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:—

"This document (the Admiralty Memorandum) shows that there is no emergency, that England is in no danger whether imminent or prospective."

"I insist once more upon what is stated in the Memorandum; there is no emergency, there is no immediate danger, there is no prospective danger." (Hansard, 1028.)

He (Sir Robert Borden) went to England to ask what England would accept in the case of an emergency, although there was no emergency." (Hansard, 1032.)

Other statements by Sir Wilfrid during the session of 1912-13 might be quoted, for example:

"The contribution which we are asked to vote is uncalled for and unnecessary, as professing to give Great Britain help for which she has no need." (Hansard, 4241.)

"But there is no question of an emergency; the alleged emergency is simply a pretence and a make-believe." (Hansard, 7321.)

Outside of the House during the recess Sir Wilfrid spoke in the same tone. At Teeswater, October 28th, speaking in the bye-election campaign, Sir Wilfrid said: "The emergency was heard of only in the speeches of Mr. Borden and Mr. Foster and some of the orators who have been here."

Other Liberal members followed their leader in this line. Dr. Clark, of Red Deer, one of the chief Liberal Speakers, said (Hansard, page 1200):—

*"I think I shall be able to offer proof from the best possible sources that a generation from now we shall be looking upon this scare as another of the human follies, and upon the historical fact that there was not the firing of a shot by one or other of these two great Christian nations." (Hansard, 1,202.) "But the extraordinary political situation we are in in Canada is this: that although there is no emergency we have a Government which comes coolly forward for its only Naval policy with an emergency contribution * * * an emergency contribution in the presence of no emergency is an absurdity in terms as it is an absurdity in fact." (Hansard, page 1204.)*

Mr. Germain:

*"The Prime Minister tells us that the situation is exceedingly grave * * * who believes it? I do not think he believes it himself. Is there a man living to-day who believes that there will be a war between Germany and England? * * * I do not believe it, no man believes it. English statesmen do not believe it." (Hansard, page 1313.)*

Dr. Beland (former Minister):

"I sincerely believe that the emergency is dead."

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Hon. R. Lemieux, ex-Minister:

"Nobody in England dreams of an emergency ; nobody here thinks there is an emergency; yet the Government choose to say that an emergency there is or rather there was one, because, since Christmas, the much dreaded emergency, like old furniture of the Jacobite period and old Sheffield plate, is relegated to the antiquarian shops."

Mr. Maclean (Halifax), Chief Financial Critic:

"I shall endeavour to show that the emergency hon. gentlemen have in mind is a political one, and it was the Government and its followers who were in emergent circumstances."

Senator Bostock, Liberal Leader in the Senate:

*"This question of emergency * * has practically fallen to pieces."*

Sir Robert Borden had pleaded for action. He had been in consultation with the British Government; he had made known to Parliament through a Memorandum from the British Admiralty what was needed. The late Liberal Government had also been made aware of the seriousness of the situation through confidential statements which, since the war with Germany has been declared, may yet be made public. Sir Wilfrid Laurier knew how serious was the situation, yet he chose to handle the whole question in the most flippant manner.

Here are some words from Sir Robert Borden's speech on introducing the Naval Proposals in Parliament on December 5th, 1912:—

"This Empire will never undertake any war of aggression, and all the influences of Canada will assuredly be arrayed against any such course ; but we know that war has come many times within the past fifty years without warning, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and thereby the power, the influence, and the destiny of more than one nation have been profoundly affected. A naval war especially may come with startling suddenness, for these tremendous engines of war are always ready and prepared for battle. * * *

"But to-day, while the clouds are heavy and we hear the booming of the distant thunder, and see the lightning flashes above the horizon, we cannot and we will not wait and deliberate until any impending storm shall have burst upon us in fury and disaster. Almost unaided, the Motherland, not for herself alone, but for us as well, is sustaining the burden of vital Imperial duty, and confronting an over-mastering necessity of national existence. Bringing the best assistance that we may in the urgency of the moment, we come thus to her aid, in token of our determination to protect and ensure the safety and integrity of this Empire, and of our resolve to defend on sea, as well as on land, our flag, our honour, and our heritage."

Down to the last moment.

Even as late as 1914, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his followers were still enjoying themselves in ridiculing the idea of an emergency. On January 19th, only six and a half months before war began, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking on the Address, said (Hansard, 1914, page 17):

“Emergency? Who speaks to-day of an emergency? Twelve months have passed since my right honourable friend the Prime Minister introduced his measures; twelve months and more have passed since that time when he saw the German peril. He saw Germany almost ready to jump at the throat of Great Britain. He saw clouds on the horizon; he saw these clouds rent with lightning; he heard the murmurs and rumbling of distant thunder. But my right hon. friend to-day may live in peace. The atmosphere is pure, the sky is clear. * * * The light has been let in on that question, and we know now how much the country and the Empire and the civilized world have been deceived upon that question of so-called emergency. * * * We have had the evidence that these panics are engineered by the armour plate builders and by the great shipbuilding firms, who do not hesitate to create false news in order to obtain contracts for their ships. * * * The German peril has disappeared if indeed there ever was such a thing.”

Then there was much obstruction to the Naval Aid Bill over the trivial pretence that in some mysterious way it would seriously affect our autonomy as a self-governing Dominion, and, therefore, the three Dreadnoughts should not be built.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, ex-Postmaster-General, in Parliament said:—

“Sir, it may be that the Canadian people will once pay tribute to the Mother Country; it may be that they will pay it twice, but do you not think that if the tie is strained too much, the breaking of the tie may ensue? * * *

“Again, I say, Mr. Speaker, this policy is an invasion of our rights as Canadians; it is the beginning of the curtailing of our rights of self-government. We are asked to contribute to-day; another election will take place, and we shall again be asked to contribute, and the flag will be waived.”

On the same principle the Liberal leaders might just as well oppose the sending of Canadian troops to aid in fighting the Empire's battles, and meeting the common danger in this war.

Sir Robert is steadfast.

At this very moment Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues were making preparations which enabled them to take action effectively as soon as the war began. They did not allow the action of the Senate to change the Government policy. When Sir Wilfrid Laurier asked him at the close of the session in which the Senate had rejected the Naval Aid Bill what the Government meant to do about it, the Premier replied:

“It is the firm intention and determination of this Government if it remains, as undoubtedly it will remain, in power, to bring down, at a later date, a proposal for the acquisition or construction of three battle-ships, as was proposed in the Naval Aid Bill of 1912. In that way, be-

fore the completion of these ships, we hope and expect to be in a position to say to the British Government: Canada is prepared to do now what the unworthy action of a partisan majority in the Senate prevented her from doing before; Canada will take over and pay for and acquire these ships and will place them at the disposal of His Majesty the King for the common defence of the great Empire of which Canada forms a part."

In England the Senate's action made it necessary to change the Naval programme. **The ships which Canada promised were needed, and had to be supplied.** Mr. Churchill explained to Parliament that in consequence of this disappointment the Admiralty would lay down at once certain ships that would otherwise have been begun later in the year. The building programme would for the present be accelerated, and if Canada should still fail, it would be necessary to build three British ships to take the place of those which they counted on from Canada. So the matter stood and stands, unless the war shall have changed the situation so that Britain can afford to reduce her Navy. Meanwhile the emergency having developed into a crisis and the crisis into a war, **the Borden Government, prevented from doing its duty in one direction, is doing it in another.**

Another War Record.

This brings us to a discussion of the conduct of the two parties and their leaders in Britain's last previous war. The South African conflict may now appear to be a relatively small affair, but it was not regarded in 1899 as a trivial war. When Kruger, remembering the victory of the Boers over the British in a previous campaign, and keeping in mind the telegram of sympathy, congratulation and encouragement he had recently received from the Emperor of Germany, declared that the war would "stagger humanity" he had reasons for his boast. We do not yet know how near Britain was to a European war at that time, or how far the prompt offer of help from over the seas restrained any powers seeking British humiliation and additional territory for themselves in Africa.

Loyal Canadians in 1899 were humiliated with the reflection that Canada, which had been the first to pass resolutions denouncing the Transvaal Government, was the last to offer support to the Empire in the Transvaal War. Canadian individuals, militia officers were prompt and eager in their offer of services; but the Government and the Premier of that day persistently blocked the way until the overwhelming torrent of loyal enthusiasm forced Sir Wilfrid Laurier to act in order to save his Government from being wrecked. Here is the record which we propose to compare with that of the Borden administration in the present war.

When Canada was held back.

In the Session of 1899 both Houses of the Canadian Parliament on the motion of the Premier in the Commons, and the Minister of Justice in the Senate, unanimously adopted a resolution of sympathy with the Imperial authorities in their effort to obtain justice for Her Majesty's subjects in the Transvaal. Maj-General Hughes, now Minister of Militia, who had personally volunteered for service in South Africa, urged that an offer of troops be made by Canada as had already been done by the Colony of Queensland. Sir Charles Tupper, then leading the Conservative Opposition, expressed the hope that there would be no war, but pointed out that an offer of troops from the Colonies might have the effect of strengthening the hands of Great Britain.

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July 9th the Government of Queensland offered mounted infantry and guns.

July 12th the Government of Victoria telegraphed that offers had been received from volunteers for service in South Africa.

July 17th an offer was sent from the Malay States.

July 17th the Council of Lagos offered troops.

July 22nd New South Wales wired that 1800 men had volunteered for service.

September 21st there was an offer from Hong Kong.

September 22nd Queensland made a second offer.

September 28th New Zealand offered a contingent of mounted rifles.

On the 3rd of October Mr. Chamberlain sent messages to Queensland, New Zealand, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria accepting the public offer of contingents, explaining the conditions and defining the character of the organization. He could not accept an offer of the Canadian Government because there was none. But he sent to that Government the same message about conditions and organization and added one significant sentence, not contained in the other despatches:

"Inform accordingly all those who have offered to raise volunteers."

Sir Wilfrid's Neutral Army.

That night Sir Wilfrid gave out an interview to his chief organ, the *Toronto Globe*, in which he said:—

*"There exists a great deal of misconception in this country regarding the powers of the Government in the present case. As I understand the Militia Act, and I may say that I have given it some study of late, our volunteers are enrolled to be used in the defence of the Dominion. They are Canadian troops to be used to fight for Canada's defence. Perhaps the most widespread misapprehension is that they cannot be sent out of Canada. To my mind it is clear that cases might arise when they might be sent to a foreign land to fight. To postulate a case: Suppose that Spain should declare war upon Great Britain. Spain has, or had, a navy, and that navy might be being got ready to assail Canada as part of the Empire. Sometimes the best method of defending one's self is to attack, and in that case Canadian soldiers might certainly be sent to Spain. In the case of the South African republic it is not analogous. There is no menace to Canada, and, although we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so. Then, again, how could we do so without Parliament granting us the money. We simply could not do anything. In other words, we should have to summon Parliament. The Government of Canada is restricted in its powers. It is responsible to Parliament, and it can do very little without the permission of Parliament. There is no doubt as to the attitude of the Government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that we have not offered the Canadian Contingent to the Home Authorities. The Militia Department duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial Government, and the reply from the War Office, as published in Saturday's *Globe*, shows their attitude on the question. As to Canada's furnishing a contingent, the Government has not discussed the question for the reasons which I have stated—reasons which, I think, must easily be understood by everyone who understands the constitutional law of the question."*

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier is inconsistent in some things; but these declarations are consistent with his own statement of seven years before (Hansard of 1892, pages 1142-3-4), that **he held out to his fellow countrymen the ideal of separation from the Empire.** He had constantly in mind the parting of the ways and he seemed to dread any precedent confirming and securing the Canadian connection with Great Britain.

Laurier and Government Surrenders.

Meanwhile the Conservative leader, Sir Charles Tupper, left no doubt of his position. When the message from Mr. Chamberlain was made public, Sir Charles wired the Premier from Yarmouth, N.S., October 5th, 1900:

“Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Ottawa :

“I hope you will send a contingent of Canadian Volunteers to aid England in the Transvaal. I know it will be warmly welcomed by the British Government, be of great service to Canada, and promote the unity of the Empire. A friend of mine will insure the lives and limbs, at his expense, to a million dollars, and I will heartily support in Parliament your action in this matter.

(Sgd.) Charles Tupper.”

During this period of refusal, while the Ministers were trying to head off the patriotic movement which threatened to sweep them from their feet, other Dominions and Colonies were acting with great energy. In ten days after Mr. Chamberlain's acceptance New South Wales, Western Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland had announced the organization of contingents. Finally, October 15th, twelve days after Mr. Chamberlain's message and Sir Wilfrid's statement to the Globe, after public opinion had been roused in Canada to a dangerous height of indignation, the Government surrendered. The Governor-General was permitted to wire to England:

“Much pleasure in telling you that my Government offers one thousand infantry for South Africa.”

But with Reservations.

Next day the Militia order was issued but still the Government guarded itself so that it would not be committed to the defence of the Empire. The Minister of Public Works made this announcement on the platform:

“We have consented to what England has asked us, but in the Order-in-Council which I hold in my hand, and which will be published one of these days, it is said that what we have just done will not be a precedent. **The precedent will not be created for me.** What I objected to, I say it again, and I cannot say it too frequently, was the creation of a precedent which would have permitted the Secretary of State for the Colonies to-morrow, the day after, in a year, or two years, to send us a despatch and say to us: ‘I would like some troops.’ We consented this time, we did well, but **I do not wish that on the next occasion a similar operation be repeated.**”

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The first contingent sailed from Quebec, Oct. 30th, 1899. After reverses to British troops, and after the other Dominions and Colonies had made a second offer, the Government showed less power of resistance, and on November 2nd offered a second contingent, the last of which sailed from Canada, February 22nd. There was a third contingent paid for by Lord Strathcona.

While the record of the Canadians in South Africa is a splendid memory, the story of the resistance, the hesitation and unwilling surrender of the Laurier Government to the insistent and irresistible demand of the people is not an incident to which the country looks back with pride. But it harmonizes perfectly with the course of that administration in naval defence, and with the conduct of the party and its leader since it lost office. It is a paradox but a fact that the party from its control of a majority in the Senate which despises public opinion and does not represent the people, has been better able to block the loyal aspirations of the country than it was fifteen years ago when it held office.

With regard to the course pursued in the South African War, the following words by Principal Grant of Queen's University, in his last public address, delivered, in Convocation Hall, to the students on January 6th, 1902, perhaps best expressed our position at that time.

"At the present moment our position is not one to be proud of. From the war (to the justice of which our Parliament had unnecessarily pledged itself, while both sides were engaged in peaceful negotiations)—the justice of which has been repeatedly affirmed by the Prime Minister and Parliament; and in which we took active part enthusiastically at the outset—we have quietly withdrawn, leaving the enormous cost of blood and treasure to be borne by the senior partner.

"True, we are permitting a few hundreds to be recruited for service, but on conditions that make our position more deplorable than ever. We are not to pay a cent of the cost. We give the bravest of our children to die by the bullet or still deadlier enteric; but someone else must pay their wages. We do not grudge the blood of our sons, but with a treasury so full that we can go on paying millions for bounties and bonuses to develop resources which are said to be the richest in the world—we grudge food, clothing and transport to them. Let the weary Titan, bearing on her back all the common burdens of Empire in peace and war, be at this charge also. Let Canada accept the blood money without a blush.

"This state of things cannot continue. The Empire must be practically as well as nominally united. That principle I continue to hold as axiomatic, if we are a nation in any sense; I might say if we are honest men in any sense."

This is Different.

We turn now to a different record, that of the Borden Ministry when the Empire is at war. There was no quibbling in August, 1914, over the question whether Canada was concerned in the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, of the German ultimatum to Russia and France, or the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg. **The Government of Canada knew that the Empire was involved in a war, and that therefore Canada was at war.** Ministers knew that Britain had striven to the last for peace, and only accepted war when refusal to fight meant present dishonour and future destruction. They knew that the defeat of Britain would destroy the British Empire and leave Canada herself the victim and prey of the

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conqueror. Therefore, the Ministers did not stand on fine constitutional questions, or guard themselves against the establishment of precedents, or spend a week balancing opinion and giving out tentative interviews. **They recognized the moment for action and did what was immediately necessary, at the same time calling Parliament to support them as soon as it could be assembled.**

Not Unprepared.

The declaration of war had not found the administration of Canada unprepared. This crisis came at the beginning of August, as some said, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. But we know that the Prime Minister of Canada has not considered the sky clear. Just twenty months, less one day, before this time Sir Robert Borden, introducing the Naval Aid Bill, had said :

“But to-day, while the clouds are heavy and we hear the booming of the distant thunder, and see the lightning flashes above the horizon, we cannot and will not wait and deliberate until any impending storm shall have burst upon us in fury and with disaster. Almost unaided, the Motherland, not for herself alone, but for us as well, is sustaining the burden of a vital Imperial duty and confronting an overmastering necessity of national existence. Bringing the best assistance that we may in the urgency of the moment, we come thus to her aid, in token of our determination to protect and ensure the safety and integrity of this Empire, and of our resolve to defend on sea, as well as on land, our flag, our honour and our heritage.”

It may be observed that this reference to the impending storm was **the text of Sir Wilfrid's ironical remarks concerning the emergency.** Sir Robert Borden had at that time not only the public memorandum of the Admiralty, but also a confidential statement giving particulars of German activity and preparation. These secret documents he showed not only to his Colleagues of the Privy Council, but also to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and through him to the Liberal ex-ministers.

Getting Ready for the Worst.

When the Naval Aid Bill, intended to assist the Empire in such an emergency as has since arisen, was destroyed by the Senate, the Government did not abandon the effort to assist the Empire in the impending struggle. In the autumn of the year in which the measure was defeated, Sir Robert Borden took effective steps to ascertain whether the Naval Aid Bill, if reintroduced, or any similar measure for assisting in the common defence of the Empire, would be passed by the Senate. He has publicly stated that his answer convinced him that the Senate would reject every such measure at the dictation of the Liberal leader ; and he has further declared his belief that a second rejection would work infinitely greater mischief than the first, but he did not neglect such efforts as were possible, and early

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in January, 1914, still believing that the Empire would be confronted with danger in the immediate future, he called a special conference of Deputy Ministers in the Departments chiefly concerned, with the Governor-General's Secretary, and certain military officials of experience. These were quietly organized under the Chairmanship of Sir Joseph Pope, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, and for the next six months gave careful study to the situation, and of the duty of each Department if war should suddenly break out. They got all the information possible from the Home Government and other sources, drew up careful plans for each Department, fitted them together into a war book and waited for the emergency.

It came with no notice. Much surprise has been expressed that the Canadian Government was ready to act at once in so many directions. **There was no hesitation as there had been at the time of the South African War.**

A Prompt Offer.

War was not declared against Great Britain until August 4th, but on August first, when Germany declared war on Britain's allies, the Prime Minister sent a secret despatch to the Imperial Government asking in what way Canada could help if the Empire should be involved, and stating that the Government were confident that a considerable force would be available in Canada for service abroad. He also sent on the same day a second despatch which expressed the hope of a peaceful solution, and assured the Home Government that if war should come

"the Canadian people will be united in a common resolve to put forth every effort and to make every sacrifice necessary to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of our Empire."

By order of the King the Colonial Secretary acknowledged this with thanks.

On August 4th, the Colonial Secretary replied that there seemed no immediate necessity for expeditionary force but suggested that the Canadian Government take any steps necessary so they would be able to raise such a force if it should be needed.

That same day, but some hours later, war was declared, and on August 6th the Canadian offer was accepted and the Dominion Government was asked for one division of troops.

Before that time the Government had taken authority to act; on the 2nd day of August the Minister of Militia was authorized to take control of telegraph, cables and hold messages.

On the next day he obtained authority to control land and wireless telegraph apparatus in the event of emergency.

On the 3rd August, the Minister of Finance took power by Order-in-Council to amend the bank system by providing an emergency increase of Dominion notes and also some special Government advances to Banks on approved security. Another Order provided for additional bank circulation and guarded the gold supply.

After War Began.

On the 4th August, the day war was declared, the two government cruisers were transferred to the Naval Service. On that day also Parliament was summoned to meet two weeks later. The Government was given power to place all the Canadian vessels at the disposal of the Imperial Government. On the same day an Order was passed placing the naval forces and naval volunteers on active service.

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On August 5th, the Minister of Militia was authorized to call out units of the active militia to complete the unexpired portion of their thirty days' training. On the same day it was arranged that any Department might call on the militia for protection to public property. It was ordered that the Royal Canadian Regiment permanent corps be increased from 599 to 922. It was also declared that a state of war existed, and orders were given as to the detention or clearing of merchant ships of the enemy and their cargo under various circumstances, all of which were detailed.

The First Contingent.

August 6th, an Order was passed:—

“To mobilize militia units of the various arms of the service of such effective strength as may be determined ; such units to be composed of officers and men who are willing to volunteer for overseas service under the British Crown ; and to organize and equip them for war and to make and perfect all arrangements necessary to enable them to enlist and be enrolled for service under His Majesty's Government, should that Government so desire.”

On the same day authority was given to place the militia on active service for defence. A censorship of cable and wireless had been established at eleven cable and wireless stations, with 131 censors, assistants and translators of codes.

On that day also the Customs Department forbade the export of 69 detailed articles which might be of use in war.

On the same day the following message was sent from the Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

A Handsome Offer.

“Ottawa, August 6th, 1914.

“My advisers request me to inform you that the people of Canada, through their Government, desire to offer one million bags of flour of 98 pounds each, as a gift to the people of the United Kingdom, to be placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government and to be used for such purposes as they may deem expedient. (Sgd.) Arthur.”

The next day the reply was received from the Colonial Secretary:

“On behalf of the people of the United Kingdom, His Majesty's Government accept with deep gratitude the splendid and welcome gift of flour from Canada, which will be of the greatest use for the steadying of prices and relief of distress in this Country.

We can never forget the generosity and promptitude of this gift and the patriotism from which it springs.”

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The 7th of August, the Order was passed to pay for two submarines. These had been purchased at Seattle where they had been built for the Government of Chili. The purchase was completed August 3rd, the day before war was declared. By International law they could not have been bought a day later when a state of war existed.

On the same day it was ordered that German subjects who quietly remained about their business should be protected; that German officers and Reservists attempting to leave the country should be arrested and detained; and that at 25 places mentioned and elsewhere precautions should be taken to guard the frontier.

On the same day a further list of prohibited exports was published.

A contract was made the same day for the conversion of ten thousand rifles and the mounted police were increased to 1200.

On the 8th of August the submarines then at Esquimalt were placed at the services of the Admiralty.

On the 10th of August, six days after war was declared, the composition of the first contingent of 22,218, with a surplus to bring it up to 32,000, was determined. On the same day 10,000 rifles, with bayonets, were ordered and 24 militia units were placed on active service in Canada.

On the 11th August it was ordered that Civil Servants who go to war with the consent of their Chiefs should receive their regular salary.

On the 13th separation allowances and other matters were determined.

Ready for Parliament.

August 14th, ten days after declaration of war, Parliament assembled. The Government laid all the Orders-in-Council before the House, the Minister of Finance was ready with his war budget and other estimates, and also the schedule of customs and excise war taxes, with all other measures in respect of finance and banking growing out of the war. Immigration legislation and a considerable number of measures of different Departments, especially the Department of Militia, were ready, and in five days the business of Parliament was completed.

One month after war was declared the Duke of Connaught had reviewed 32,000 men collected at Valcartier from all parts of Canada and then under training, while a corps of a thousand was waiting for transportation to Bermuda and many thousands were doing guard duty at various points throughout Canada.

On the 19th of October the Prime Minister announced that from that day until the end of the war Canada would keep continuously in training and under arms thirty thousand men. This was promptly carried out, and on the 23rd of November the Prime Minister made a further announcement that the number in training would be increased from 30,000 to 50,000. A Second Contingent was ready about the end of December, but on the advice and at the request of the War Office its despatch to Great Britain was postponed until the spring. At present more than 40,000 Canadians have crossed the seas, and the Canadian forces now at the front have already greatly distinguished themselves while fighting beside the best troops of the Empire.

Our Debt to the Navy.

If the present war brings home to us one conviction more than another it is the debt of gratitude we owe to the Imperial Navy of Great Britain whose strong arm through all the years has been ready to protect us from every foe.

We have become possessed of this great Canadian heritage without the expenditure of a cent of Canadian money in wars of conquest or in defence against a foreign foe.

Perils which the Senate's Action Involved.

We have had some disasters at sea, but each of them has been more than amply wiped out. British commerce has not been interfered with to any serious extent, and dangerous raids, with one important exception, have been prevented. Let us not forget that in the great task which the British Navy has been obliged to undertake, it has had the powerful assistance of the great navies of France and of Japan. The French and Japanese Navies comprise a united fighting force which of itself would be practically equivalent to the whole German Navy. Without their powerful assistance it is impossible to say what destruction of commerce, what raids upon our coasts, what destruction of cities, towns and villages might have occurred. The Senate of Canada, under the direction of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, deliberately placed us in this situation of danger and possible disaster when it rejected the Navy Aid Bill in May, 1913.

